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An Eventful Day--Revelling Among the Glacial Monarchs.

Mountain Source of Ice-Rivers--Wild Goats --Music of the Cascades.

[SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE BULLETIN.]

CASCADE CAMP,
SUM DUM BAY, August 19, 1880. }

This morning one of my good times came after a year's waiting, for then I set out under a happy group of welcoming conditions to explore the long left arm of this icy bay, with everything to bring glacial success. I was here last year during a stormy time, towards the end of November, when, after urging my way through the ice for fifteen miles, I was compelled to turn back by stress of weather and the danger of being frozen in. We got away from camp about 6 o'clock, and pulled merrily on through fog and rain along the beautiful wooded shore on our right, passing bergs here and there, the largest of which, though not over 200 feet long, seemed, as they loomed gray and indistinct through the fog, to be at least half a mile long, and 100 feet high. For the first five hours the sailing was open and easy, nor was there anything very exciting to be seen or heard, save now and then the thunder of a falling berg rolled and echoed from cliff to cliff, and the sustained roar and white outbounding arches of cascade among the cliffs.

About 11 o'clock we reached a point where the fiord presented an unbroken front of packed ice all the way across, and we ran ashore to fit a block of wood on the cut-water of our canoe to prevent its being battered or broken. While Tyeen, who had considerable experience among berg-ice, was at work on the canoe, the other Indians prepared a warm lunch, making a fire with wood that had been collected by the Sum Dum Indians.

AN INDIAN CAMP--CURIOUS SWEAT-HOUSES, ETC.

The smooth, sheltered hollow where we landed seems to be a favorite camping-ground of those Indians in coming and going to hunt seals. The pole-frames of tents, tied with cedar bark, are left standing on level spots, while the ground about them is strewn with seal bones and bits of salmon and spruce bark. I also noticed several sweat-houses and a number of square frames, made of crossed splints of cedar, tied at the points of intersection with strips of bark. These are used, the Indians tell me, for the purpose of drying sections of the thick bark of the Merten spruce on, to prepare it for being packed and stored away in good shape for winter use as food. Large quantities of this astringent are eaten, after being soaked in hot water, by the Indians hereabouts, in connection with their greasy seal and fish, for food. I saw large numbers of trees that had been cut down and peeled along the shores of Chatham Strait, Lynn Canal, Prince Frederic Sound and elsewhere.

AMONG THE BERGS.

For a mile or two we found the work of pushing through the ice rather tiresome. An opening of twenty or thirty yards would be found here and there, then a close pack that had to be opened by pushing the smaller bergs aside with poles. I enjoyed the labor, however, for the fine lessons I got, and in an hour or two we found zigzag lanes of water, through which we paddled with but little interruption, and had leisure to study the wonderful variety of forms the bergs presented as we glided past them. The largest we saw did not greatly exceed 200 feet in length, or twenty-five or thirty feet in height above the water. Such bergs would draw from 150 to 200 feet of water. All those that have floated long undisturbed have a projecting base at the water line, caused by the more rapid melting of the immersed portion. When a portion of the berg breaks off, another base line is formed, and the old one, sharply cut, may be seen rising at all angles, giving it a marked character, while many of the oldest ones are beautifully ridged by the melting out of angular furrows running strictly parallel from side to side, revealing the bedded structure of the ice, acquired centuries ago, far back on the mountain whence it came. A berg suddenly going to pieces is a grand sight, especially when the water is calm. Then there is no visible motion, save perchance the slow drift in the tide current, and the prolonged roar of its fall comes with startling effect, and heavy swells are raised that haste away in every direction to tell what has taken place, and tens of thousands of its neighbors rock and swash in sympathy, repeating the news over and over again. We were too near several large ones that fell as we passed, and our canoe had narrow escapes. The Indians in pursuit of seals are frequently killed in this manner.

WILD GOATS.

In the afternoon, while we were admiring the scenery, which, as we approach the head of the fiord, becomes more and more sublime, one of our Indians called attention to a flock of wild goats on the mountain side overhead, and soon afterwards we saw two other flocks, at a height of about 1,500 feet, relieved against the mountains as white spots. They are very abundant here and throughout the Alaskan Alps in general, feeding on the grassy slopes above the timber line, in company with the wild sheep. Their long, yellowish hair is shed at this time of year, and they are now snowy white. None of nature's cattle are better fed or better protected from the cold. Tyen told us that before the introduction of guns they used to hunt them with spears, chasing them with their wolf-dogs, and thus bringing them to bay among the rocks, where they were easily approached and killed.

A KING OF GLACIERS.

The upper half of the fiord is about from a mile to a mile and a half wide, and shut in by sublime Yosemite cliffs, nobly sculptured and adorned with snowy falls, and cascades, and fringes of trees, and bushes and small patches of flowers. The general interest grows as we advance, but amid so crowded a display of novel beauty it is not easy to concentrate the attention long enough on any portion of it without giving more days and years than our lives can afford. I was determined, at least, to see the grand fountain of all this ice. As we passed headland after headland, hoping as each was rounded we should obtain a view of it, it still remained very perfectly hidden. "Ice mountain hi yu Kuntucks hide," said Tyen, (glaciers know how to hide extremely well,) as he rested for a moment after rounding a huge granite shoulder of the wall, whence we expected to gain a view of the extreme head of the fiord. The bergs, however, towards the head were nowhere closely packed and we made good progress, and finally found our game occupying a branch of the fiord that comes in from the northeast, at half-past 8 o'clock, 14½ hours after setting out.

This glacier is about ¾ths of a mile wide at the snout, and probably about 800 feet deep, with a wall of beautifully carved ice about 150 feet high facing the deep blue water of the fiord. It is much wider a few miles farther back, the snout being jammed between sheer granite walls from 3,500 to 4,000 feet high. It shows grandly from where it broke on our sight, as it comes sweeping boldly forward and downward in its majestic channel, swaying from side to side around stern unflinching rock pillars in graceful fluent lines. While I stood in the canoe making a sketch of it several bergs came off with a tremendous dash and thunder, raising a fine dust and spray of ice and water to a height of 100 feet. "The ice-mountain is well disposed toward you" said Tyen. "See, he is firing his big guns to welcome you."

TWIN GLACIER MONARCHS.

After completing my sketch and entering a few notes I directed the Indians to pull around a lofty burnished rock on the west side of the channel, where, as I knew from the trend of the canyon, a large glacier once came in, and what was my delight to discover that this glacier was still in existence, and still pouring its ice in the form of bergs into a branch of the fiord. Even the Indians shared my joy and shouted with me. I expected only one first class glacier here, and found two. They are only about two miles apart, and how glorious a mansion does that precious pair dwell in! After sunset we made haste to seek a camp ground. I would fain have shared these upper chambers with the two glaciers, but there was no landing in sight, and we had to make our way back a few miles in the twilight to the mouth of a side-canon, where some timber was seen on the way up. There seemed to be a good landing as we approached the shore, but coming nearer we found that the granite fell directly into deep water without leaving any level margin, though the slope a short distance back is not very steep.

A ROUGH SCRAMBLE—A BIT OF EDEN.

After narrowly scanning the various seams and steps that roughened the granite, we concluded to attempt a landing rather than grope our way farther down the fiord through the ice. And what a time we had climbing on hands and knees up the slippery rocks to this little garden shelf, some 200 feet above the water, and dragging indispensables after us. But it is a glorious camp after all, the very best of all the trip. For in the first place, it is set in a charming little garden, with the flowers in bloom, and ripe berries are nodding from a fringe of bushes around its edges, and close alongside, to the right of us, there is a lofty mountain capped with ice, and from the blue down-curved edge of that ice-cap there are sixteen silvery cascades, all in a row, falling about 4,000 feet, each one of the sixteen large enough to be heard at least two miles.

How beautiful is the fire-light on the nearest larkspurs and geraniums and daisies of our garden! How hearty the wave-greeting on the rocks below, sent us by the two glaciers! And how glorious a song the sixteen cascades are singing!

JOHN MUIR.